

O/WB NO. 1 108 0003  
EXP. 12/31/84

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

OCT 13 1983

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Administration Building, Coker College

and/or common Davidson Hall, Coker College (preferred)

2. Location

street & number College Avenue

NA not for publication

city, town Hartsville

NA vicinity of

~~Congressional district~~

state South Carolina

code 045

county Darlington

code 031

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	NA in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	NA being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Coker College

street & number Coker College

city, town Hartsville

NA vicinity of

state South Carolina 29550

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Darlington County Courthouse

street & number Public Square

city, town Darlington

state South Carolina 29532

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Inventory of Historic Places in South Carolina

has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1982

federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records South Carolina Department of Archives and History

city, town Columbia

state South Carolina 29211

---

## 7. Description

---

**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved      date \_\_\_\_\_

---

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

Davidson Hall, located on the Coker College campus in Hartsville, South Carolina, was designed by the firm of Wilson, Sompayrac, and Urquhart and built ca. 1909-1910. It was commissioned by Major James Lide Coker, founder of Coker College, and was the first building constructed for the college. This functional two-story, brick, educational building was embellished with details of neoclassical revival influence. Davidson Hall has been altered very little in its seventy-three years and remains the focal point of the Coker College campus.

Davidson Hall is a large, two-story, rectangular plan, brick building laid in common bond. It has a hip roof and a projecting semicircular auditorium on the rear (east) elevation. The central portion of the fifteen-bay facade (west elevation) features a projecting, two-story, pedimented portico, which is supported by six stuccoed Ionic columns with scamozzi capitals. The pediment features a plain frieze with the name "Davidson Hall" on it, dentil molding, and a round louvered vent. The area beneath the portico is recessed and has three bays on each story. The first story features the central main entrance, solid double doors with a semicircular fanlight above. The door surround has pilasters and console brackets supporting a segmental-arched pediment with dentil cornices. The entrance is flanked by single, eight-over-eight-light, double-hung sash windows with flat arches of radiating voussoirs. The second story has a central tripartite window with lattice muntins flanked by single, eight-over-eight-light windows. The recessed, portico-sheltered portion of the facade is flanked by tripartite windows on each story. The first story windows feature flat arches of radiating voussoirs with brick keystones. Five-bay wings extend to each side of these bays and have arched six-over-six windows on the first story with brick segmental-arched surrounds. The second story has six-over-six-light windows. A cornice embellished with dentil molding encircles the entire building.

The north and south elevations feature a double door entrance with semicircular transom recessed beneath a pedimented brick archway with keystone and shoulder molding. Above this entrance is a tripartite window. The semicircular projecting auditorium on the center of the rear (east) elevation is divided into three stories. The first story has a single door entrance in a recessed brick arch with round arch surround and is flanked by seven windows to each side, wrapping the auditorium. The six-over-six windows have radiating voussoir brick flat arches and are recessed beneath round brick arches. The second story features fifteen twelve-over-twelve-light, double-hung sash windows with brick segmental arched surrounds. The third story has fifteen eight-over-eight-light windows. Five-bay wings with fenestration identical to the facade extend on either side of the auditorium projection.

Davidson Hall has a composition shingle roof and rests on a raised, stuccoed brick foundation. The only alteration to the exterior was the replacement of the front doors and the addition of the fanlight.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) local history
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** ca. 1909-1910      **Builder/Architect** Wilson, Sompayrac, and Urquhart

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Davidson Hall, located on the campus of Coker College in Hartsville, Darlington County, South Carolina, was constructed ca. 1909-1910, with funds donated by the college's founder, Major James Lide Coker. Major Coker, noted Hartsville industrialist, merchant, banker, and agriculturalist, founded Coker College to provide quality education for women and to extend cultural opportunities to the Pee Dee region. Davidson Hall is significant for its association with Major Coker's philanthropy and it is important in the history of education in the Pee Dee. Designed by the prominent South Carolina firm of Wilson, Sompayrac, and Urquhart, the two-story, brick educational building is enhanced by neoclassical details and stands out as one of Hartsville's finest buildings.

### Additional Information:

Coker College for women was founded in 1908 by Major James Lide Coker, one of Hartsville's most prominent citizens. Major Coker had also been the primary benefactor of Welsh Neck High School, the college's predecessor. Coker College located on the old Welsh Neck campus and took over its buildings, endowment, and library. The establishment of a four-year college for women caused great excitement in this rural, culturally and economically deprived area. Coker was the first college in the region and offered cultural and educational opportunities never before available to the residents of the Pee Dee.<sup>1</sup>

Coker opened for its first session September 30, 1908, with Dr. Edward V. Baldy as its president. The Welsh Neck physical plant provided a solid start for the forty-eight students and twelve professors. In 1909 Major Coker made the first of many donations to the college, \$25,000 for a permanent administration building. The building was designed by the prominent South Carolina architectural firm of Wilson, Sompayrac, and Urquhart and was described as thoroughly modern in design and "as near perfect in point and style as it was possible." As constructed, Davidson Hall contained lecture rooms, reception rooms, a parlor, the president's offices, and the art department, in addition to a semicircular auditorium, which seated over 550.<sup>2</sup>

Davidson Hall also housed the Coker College library. It is believed that the existing college library, inherited from Welsh Neck, was so small that no space was set aside for it in the building plans. The collection was simply housed in one of the lecture rooms. Through the years as the library acquired more volumes, adjoining rooms were utilized for the library. In 1963 a new library was constructed and the Davidson Hall space reverted to office use. In 1977 the college acquired a new administration building and Davidson Hall was used for other office needs. At this time the building was named for beloved Coker College professor Elizabeth Davidson.<sup>3</sup>

Davidson Hall was the first building constructed for Coker College and it became the symbol of the school; its facade is incorporated into the college seal.<sup>4</sup> It also became a symbol, to the people of the Pee Dee, of Major Coker's dream for the Pee Dee, cultural and educational opportunities for women as well as the rest of the community.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .9 acres

Quadrangle name Hartsville North

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

A 

1	7	5	8	5	6	7	9	3	8	0	4	1	9	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

**Verbal boundary description and justification** The boundary of the Davidson Hall nomination is shown as the red line on the accompanying Darlington County Tax Map #56-7 drawn on a scale of 100 feet to the inch. The boundaries include only Davidson Hall and the land upon which it sits.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state NA code county NA code

state NA code county NA code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Suzanne Pickens Wylie Robert R. Simpson  
Martha Walker Fullington Coker College

organization South Carolina Department of Archives and History date August 23, 1983

street & number 1430 Senate Street telephone (803) 758-5816

city or town Columbia state South Carolina 29211

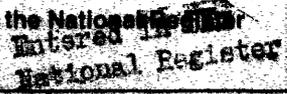
# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:  
 national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Charles E. Lee*  
title Charles E. Lee State Historic Preservation Officer date September 22, 1983

For NPS use only  
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register  
*for Delores Byers* 11/10/83  
Keeper of the National Register



Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_  
Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only  
received  
date entered

Continuation sheet 1

Item number 7

Page 1

Description (Continued)

Interior:

The administration portion of the first floor retains basically the original plan of offices and lecture rooms. Some partitions have been added as needed to make smaller offices. Most of the interior woodwork is original and includes ornate stairways and doorways with shelf architraves, console brackets and dentil molding. The ceilings on the first floor have been lowered with accoustical tile but the originals remain above. The second floor, which originally had classrooms, was used as the college library until 1963. It basically retains its original plan. The auditorium has a stage and dressing rooms on the first floor and seats some 325 persons. The second floor has closets on either side of the stage and a balcony which seats 250. The original picture molding remains intact.

Surroundings:

Davidson Hall is located in the center of the Coker College campus proper. It is the focal point of College Drive, a one-block avenue of cedars leading to the college. It is surrounded by other academic buildings, a bell tower, and an amphitheater.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet 2

Item number 8

Page 1

Significance (Continued)

Architecture :

Davidson Hall was designed by the firm of Wilson, Sompayrac, and Urquhart. The senior member of the firm, Charles Coker Wilson, was a Hartsville native and a relative of Major Coker. He went on to design all of the Coker College buildings commissioned before 1920. He was best known for his educational buildings and designed buildings on several college campuses throughout the Southeast as well as numerous public schools. Davidson Hall is a fine example of the firm's work and its ability to design an efficient, functional educational building with the embellishments of fine architectural style and detail. The neoclassical elements exhibited by Davidson Hall, classical proportions, Ionic columns, intricate moldings, and massive pediments, make it one of Hartsville's outstanding works of architecture.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet 3

Item number 9

Page 1

Bibliography

Bulletin of Coker College for Women. Columbia, S.C.: The State Co.,  
Printers, 1909.

Columbia, South Carolina. South Carolina Department of Archives and History.  
Davidson Hall National Register file. Robert R. Simpson to Suzanne Pickens  
Wylie, July 29, 1983.

Hartsville Messenger, March 24, 31, 1910.

Simpson, Robert R. Coker College: The Diamond Jubilee History. Hartsville, S.C.:  
Coker College, 1983.

## Footnotes

1

Robert R. Simpson, Coker College: The Diamond Jubilee History (Hartsville, S.C.: Coker College, 1983), pp. 1-4; Hartsville Messenger, March 24, 1910, p. 1; Hartsville Messenger, March 31, 1910, pp. 2, 6.

2

Simpson, Coker College, pp. 4-6; Messenger, March 24, 1910; Bulletin of Coker College for Women (Columbia, S.C.: The State Co., Printers, 1909), foldout.

3

Robert R. Simpson to Suzanne Pickens Wylie, July 29, 1983, Davidson Hall National Register file, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, South Carolina; Simpson, Coker College, pp. 28-30.

4

Simpson, Coker College, pp. 5-6.